IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11 as follows:

1.   (Currently Amended)   A communication distribution controlling method distributing one communication to any of a plurality of relay devices capable of relaying the one communication in correspondence with a connection request of the one communication within a series of communications from a client, comprising the steps of:

receiving a communication connection request from a client;

determining from an identifier written in a communication connection request, whether or not a communication connection used commonly for passing communications of a same one series is established; and

connecting the requested communication to a particular relay device as a relay destination of an established communication connection if the communication connection is established,

wherein said identifier is an IP address of said client, or is contained within the URL or header information of the communication connection request.

2.   (Cancelled)

3.   (Currently Amended)   A communication distribution controlling method distributing one communication to any of a plurality of relay devices capable of

relaying the one communication in correspondence with a connection request of the one communication within a series of communications from a client, comprising the steps of:

receiving a connection request of an initial communication within a series of communications from a client;

establishing a communication connection for the communication requested to be connected;

connecting the requested communication to a particular relay device as a relay destination of the established connection; and

notifying a client side of an identifier identifying the established connection so as to have the same identifier be written into connection requests of communications to follow the initial communication,

wherein said identifier is contained within the URL or header information of the communication connection request.

4.   (Original)   The communication distribution controlling method according to claim 3, further comprising:

monitoring an elapsed time from when the initial communication within the series of communications from the client is disconnected; and

invalidating the communication connection corresponding to the series of communications, and the identifier corresponding to the communication connection, when the elapsed time exceeds a predetermined value.

3

5.   (Currently Amended)   A communication distribution controlling apparatus distributing one communication to any of a plurality of relay devices capable of relaying the one communication in correspondence with a connection request of the one communication within a series of communications from a client, comprising:

a connection request receiving unit receiving a communication connection request from a client;

a connection determining unit determining from an identifier written in a communication connection request, whether or not a communication connection used commonly for passing communications of a same one series is established; and

a communication connecting unit connecting the requested communication to a particular relay device as a relay destination of an established communication connection if the communication connection is established,

wherein said identifier is an IP address of said client, or is contained within the URL or header information of the communication connection request.

6.   (Cancelled)

7.   (Currently Amended)   A communication distribution controlling apparatus distributing one communication to any of a plurality of relay devices capable of

relaying the one communication in correspondence with a connection request of the one communication within a series of communications from a client, comprising:

a connection request receiving unit receiving a connection request of an initial communication within a series of communications from a client;

a connection establishing unit establishing a communication connection for the communication requested to be connected;

a communication connecting unit connecting the requested communication to a particular relay device as a relay destination of the established connection; and

a notifying unit notifying a client side of an identifier identifying the established connection so as to have the same identifier be written into connection requests of communications to follow the initial communication,

wherein said identifier is contained within the URL or header information of the communication connection request.

8. (Original) The communication distribution controlling apparatus according to claim 7, further comprising:

a monitoring unit monitoring an elapsed time from when the initial communication within the series of communications from the client is disconnected; and

an invalidating unit invalidating the communication connection corresponding to the series of communications, and the identifier corresponding to the communication connection, when the elapsed time exceeds a predetermined value.

9. (Currently Amended)   A computer-readable storage medium on which is recorded a program for causing a computer, which distributes one communication to any of a plurality of relay devices that can relay the one communication in correspondence with a connection request of the one communication within a series of communications from a client, to execute a process, the process comprising the steps of:

receiving a communication connection request from a client;

determining from an identifier written in a communication connection request, whether or not a communication connection used commonly for passing communications of a same one series is established; and

connecting the requested communication to a particular relay device as a relay destination of an established communication connection if the communication connection is established,

wherein said identifier is an IP address of said client, or is contained within the URL or header information of the communication connection request.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended)   A computer-readable storage medium on which is recorded a program for causing a computer, which distributes one communication to any of a plurality of relay devices that can relay the one communication in correspondence with

a connection request of the one communication within a series of communications from a client, to execute a process, the process comprising the steps of:

receiving a connection request of an initial communication within a series of communications from a client;

establishing a communication connection for the communication requested to be connected;

connecting the requested communication to a particular relay device as a relay destination of the established connection; and

notifying a client side of an identifier identifying the established connection so as to have the same identifier be written into connection requests of communications to follow the initial communication,

wherein said identifier is contained within the URL or header information of the communication connection request.

12.   (Previously Presented)   The storage medium according to claim 11, the process further comprising the steps of:

monitoring an elapsed time from when the initial communication within the series of communications from the client is disconnected; and

invalidating the communication connection corresponding to the series of communications, and the identifier corresponding to the communication connection, when the elapsed time exceeds a predetermined value.